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SCIENCE

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HUXLEY ON EDUCATION¹

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave comes to the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high
Can keep my own away from me.
—BURROUGHS.

THE most sanguine day of the college year is the opening one: the student has not yet faced the impossible task annually presented of embracing the modern world of knowledge; his errors and failures of earlier years are forgotten; he faces the coming months full of new hope.

How would my old master, Huxley, address you if he were to find you in this felicitous frame of mind, sharpening your wits and your pencils for the contest which will begin to-morrow morning in every hall and laboratory of this great university? May I speak for him as I heard him during the winter of 1879–80 from his lecture desk and as he kindly in conversation gave me of his stores of wisdom and experience? May I add from his truly brilliant essays entitled "Science and Education," delivered between 1874 and 1887? May I contribute also from my own thirty-seven years of life as a student and teacher, beginning in 1873 and reaching a turning point in 1910 when Columbia enrolled me among its research professors? It was Huxley's life, his example, the tone of his writings rather than his actual precepts, which most influenced me, for in 1879 he was so intensely absorbed in public work and administration, as well as in research and teaching, that little opportunity remained for personal conferences with his

¹Address at the opening of the college year, Columbia University, September 28, 1910.